

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

August 29, 1983

PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE AS OF 7:30 AM EDT

Summary of statement by Larry Speakes at Santa Barbara White House:

The President was awakened by Judge Clark at 1:55 a.m. with information about the casualties in Beirut. The President expressed profound sorrow and termed the deaths tragic. He praised the courage of the Marines for their role as peacekeepers.

Speakes news conference of yesterday, that discussed Begin resignation and McFarlane mission, is attached.

US spokesmen in Beirut and at DOD have confirmed three killed, five wounded, and said that Marines have returned fire with 155mm howitzers and helicopter gunships. OSD(PA) has telephone communications with the public affairs office in Beirut, which is the primary point for release of information on US military activities there.

State Department press guidance is attached.

New coverage is extensive, with morning networks carrying live reports from Beirut and the Pentagon. Analysts Joseph Sisco and Hal Saunders have been interviewed, with Sisco indicating US presence in Lebanon continues to be the essential ingredient.

President's Saturday radio address dealt with overall situation in the Middle East, reaffirming commitment to September 1, 1982 peace initiative, and describing continued Israeli settlement activity as an "obstacle to peace." (TEXT ATTACHED)

Press Guidance

August 29, 1983

SHELLING OF MARINE POSITIONS IN LEBANON

Q: What's happening in Beirut?

A: A US Marine position at Beirut Airport came under fire at 0349 EDT following a day and night of sporadic fighting between forces of the Lebanese Army and Lebanese Shi'ite militia groups in South Beirut. There has also been firing from Druze positions. ^{Three} ~~Two~~ Marines were killed and ^{Five} ~~one~~ reported wounded.

Q: Does that mean that the Marines are "engaged in hostilities" in the sense of the War Powers resolution?

A: We will have to see how this situation develops before we make any such determination.

Q: Are the Marines shooting back?

A: They are authorized to fire in self defense. We would refer you to DoD for details.

Q: Has there been any fighting near the US Embassy or Ambassador's residence?

A: There is fighting at various ^{places} ~~places~~ in the city, including near our temporary offices in the British Embassy. Although there is no indication that the American Embassy residence has been targetted, the area around it has been taking artillery fire and there are broken windows at the residence. There are no reports of injuries to personnel of the Embassy or Military Assistance office.

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Q: Where are McFarlane and Fairbanks?

A: Ambassador McFarlane returned to Beirut by helicopter this morning. Mr. Fairbanks spent the night in Saudi Arabia.

Drafted by: NEA-Mack

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THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary
(Santa Barbara, California)

PRESS BRIEFING
BY
LARRY SPEAKES
August 28, 1983
Sheraton Santa Barbara Hotel

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10:05 a.m. PDT
1:05 p.m. EDT

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Santa Barbara, California)

PRESS BRIEFING
BY
LARRY SPEAKES

August 28, 1983
Sheraton Santa Barbara Hotel

10:05 a.m. PDT
1:05 p.m. EDT

MR. SPEAKES: Okay, to review the morning's exercises here, the President this morning was informed at 7:00 a.m. by Jim Baker that there were press reports that Prime Minister Begin had indicated his intention to resign. They spoke for about two minutes. We had been following the situation since about 3:30 a.m., when the first Israeli announcement took place. We have been dealing with press reports during that time.

Admiral Poindexter, who is the NSC Representative here, was in contact with the National Security Council in Washington, and --

Q Poindexter was what?

Q NSC and State --

MR. SPEAKES: -- was in contact with the National Security Council and the State Department in Washington.

In addition, around 8:00 o'clock this morning, Judge Clark spoke with Ambassador McFarlane. McFarlane is in London, and he spoke to him in order to get his assessment of the situation in Israel, of the announcement in Israel, and at the same time to get a rather detailed report on him, on his talks that have taken place in Europe this week.

As you know, McFarlane has been in Rome; he has been in Paris, and lately, in London. McFarlane's purpose there is to discuss the efforts, common efforts of the parties in the region to pursue the common goal of a fully sovereign Lebanon, free of all foreign forces, and to discuss ways to arrive at a national consensus in Lebanon toward reaching these goals, and to discuss ways that the U. S. and its allies in the multinational force can assist in obtaining these goals.

McFarlane is leaving London today, and he will return to the region shortly. As usual, we do not specify his ongoing itinerary.

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McFarlane's report on his talks there in the three European capitals, he reports that his talks have been encouraging, that the process is moving, that there is a --

Q Wait a minute.

MR. SPEAKES: -- good faith effort on the part of all parties. McFarlane is asking that the process for peace be given a chance, that it be kept moving forward.

We anticipate, as I say, McFarlane's mission going on, and as far as the situation in Israel affecting Ambassador McFarlane's discussions in the Middle East, we expect him to continue to receive full cooperation from the Israelis.

After the McFarlane phone conversation, Clark spoke for some time with the President this morning and indicated to him the details of the McFarlane conversation, which the President was pleased to receive the note of progress -- encouragement.

As we said earlier, we will have no specific comments on the announcement from the Israelis because, as you know, it is now characterized as an intention to resign, and the Prime Minister has not accepted -- has not submitted his resignation.

We, in addition, the State Department has been in telephone contact with Ambassador Sam Lewis in Israel to receive his assessment of the situation. So in short, what we have done is: Number one, informed the President of the developments, both in Israel and both the McFarlane report; number two, we have kept in close contact with our ambassadors in order to have their assessment of the announcement in Israel.

Those who were asking for dates, the last visit between the President and the Prime Minister in Washington was June 21st, 1982. The two cancelled visits, first because of his wife's death, was November '82 -- I don't have the date -- and the most recent was July 26-27, '83, postponed because of personal reasons, so two postponed visits, and the one visit in '82.

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MR. SPEAKES: That is the extent of my --

Q Where is this progress? Is it progress on getting the Multinational Forces expanded?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q Or is there progress on getting troops out of Lebanon?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, the progress is this: As you know, McFarlane has had talks with the confessional factions, the confessional groups, both in Beirut and in Europe. It was announced yesterday that he had met with Walid Jumblatt the leader of the Druse group, and that's what he's assessing, that there is encouragement as a result of these talks.

In addition, as far as keeping the process moving, we are encouraging all parties, and that includes the Syrians, the Israelis, the confessional groups in Lebanon, as well as our allies in the MNF, to continue their efforts to keep the progress moving.

Q So the progress is that these warring factions have agreed to --

MR. SPEAKES: No, that we are encouraged by discussions with them.

Q What is the goal of those discussions, Larry?

MR. SPEAKES: The goal of those discussions is to ensure an orderly redeployment of Israeli forces and the ability of the Lebanese armed forces to assume control in an orderly fashion in those areas of redeployment.

Q Larry, does the President think any move within the government, any major move, by Begin, or otherwise, in the Israeli government is going to leave a negative effect on these talks and also on the process?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, we cannot make any assessment as far as what will happen in the Israeli government because that's clearly something that is in process at the moment.

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Q I couldn't hear you, Larry. What was that?

MR. SPEAKES: We cannot make any assessment of what is happening in the Israeli Government because that is something that is in process at the moment. However, as I stated, we do expect Ambassador McFarlane to continue to receive cooperation from the Israelis.

Q That is a little confusing. Why wouldn't he continue to receive --

MR. SPEAKES: Nobody said he wouldn't.

Q You mean no matter what happens to the Israeli Government, that you expect them to continue to cooperate?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, you know --

Q Is that what you are saying?

MR. SPEAKES: Yeah, sure. He has, and from this point on we expect it to continue. We have no reason to doubt that it wouldn't.

Q Larry, has Ambassador Lewis given any indication that this announcement by Begin of his intention to resign might be something political and not substantive?

MR. SPEAKES: Mark, we really won't discuss any internal discussions we have had as an assessment. It is much too early to make assessments on that. And we certainly will not do it publicly.

Q Can you tell us, Larry, has there been any decision on expanding the U.S. participation in the Multi-national Force?

MR. SPEAKES: No, there has not.

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Q Isn't that part of the talks that McFarlane is scheduled for?

MR. SPEAKES: Certainly it would be a matter of discussion. But, once again, as far as any role or explanation of the MNF, it's too early to discuss.

Q It's too early to discuss?

MR. SPEAKES: Yeah.

Q As a mechanical thing, what occurs next, should he resign? Is there an election?

MR. SPEAKES: As I understand it, not being an expert on the Israeli constitution, as I understand it, the Knisnet meets. Its next scheduled meeting is in October, the next regular, scheduled meeting is in October. The Prime Minister resigns to the President and the President, as in most parliamentary governments, has an option of appointing a prime minister for the caretaker government, and then a new prime minister is named. Now, I'm not certain of that, so check it with the Israeli people.

Q Larry, are you aware of the new outbreak of fighting between the Lebanese army and the Shiite throughout the Beirut airport?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, we have seen the reports.

Q Anything you gather --

MR. SPEAKES: No, with the exception that it's an important and critical time in the peace process there. And we would certainly hope that there will be restraint shown on the part of all parties in Lebanon.

Q Larry, is there a date for that Israeli redeployment? Do we know of a date when they plan to actually make the move?

MR. SPEAKES: There were news reports that they planned to make it next Tuesday. But I do not know what the specifics are.

Q Are Clark and Reagan scheduled to meet at all today to discuss this personally?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q Where is Clark?

MR. SPEAKES: The telephone is quite adequate.

Q Is the President planning to call Begin at all?

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MR. SPEAKES: There are no specific plans right now.

Q Has Begin at all called Reagan?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q Is Clark at his ranch?

MR. SPEAKES: I think so.

Q Larry, I am a little confused about the Multinational Force. Are you saying that these reports that we have ruled out an expansion of the Force are incorrect, that there has been no decision?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, the only thing I am indicating is that until we can make some determination about the political situation in the area of redeployment, that it is premature to discuss any change of role and size of the MNF.

Q Are you saying McFarlane hasn't gotten to the point where there is an accurate assessment of what the political forces are going to do there?

MR. SPEAKES: That's right.

Q What is the basis for his encouragement?

MR. SPEAKES: His talks, good faith.

Q Larry, does the Administration characterize the relationship between Reagan and Begin?

MR. SPEAKES: That sounds like a question you would ask. We have always had our historically close ties with Israel, and those will continue, and we reaffirm them. The President did so in his broadcast yesterday. And while there often are disagreements among friends, friends and allies, friends and allies can work them out. We have done so with Israel. And the relationship between the President and the Prime Minister has been a good one.

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Q Larry, you said you are encouraged by the talks with McFarlane and various Lebanese factions. Is there any movement at all in terms of getting Syrian or Israeli troops completely out of the country? Is that on hold at the moment?

MR. SPEAKES: Syrian and Israeli troops, well, that's a matter of discussion. There have been meetings with the Syrians. The Israelis have indicated that they're redeploying. They have indicated it as a part of total withdrawal. So discussions continue.

Q Why is he in London?

MR. SPEAKES: To speak with the British, who have a small contingent, I understand, in the Multinational Force.

Q What is the basis for the encouragement about Syria? I don't remember hearing that the Syrians had given an inch.

MR. SPEAKES: I haven't addressed it in connection with Syria. I addressed it in connection with his meetings in Europe.

Q Has Shultz been involved in this at all?

MR. SPEAKES: Certainly he has been involved in discussions with his Ambassador, and so forth.

Q Shultz has?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q Is he back at the State Department?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know that he's back in Washington.

Q Has Clark talked to Shultz?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know whether they've talked or not. I think they have in the past several days.

Q On what basis are we confident that cooperation will continue with the Israelis?

MR. SPEAKES: Just our assessment that it will. And we have no reason --

Q But it is too early to make an assessment, we say, on other stuff. How are we making an assessment on that?

MR. SPEAKES: We just feel confident it will happen.

Q What?

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MR. SPEAKES: Confident it will happen.

Q Do early assessments indicate that if he should resign, there would be any change, any drastic change?

MR. SPEAKES: That's too -- it's premature.

Q Just based on the parliamentary procedure, does it appear that --

MR. SPEAKES: I can't say.

Okay, look --

Q Did the President have any comment when he heard about Begin?

MR. SPEAKES: I'm sure he did, but when we're prepared to speak, we will speak.

Q Will he?

MR. SPEAKES: We will.

Q You didn't say mazal tov?

MR. SPEAKES: What does that mean?

Q Can you characterize his reaction at all, the President's?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q Do you have any reaction at all to the way the day went yesterday in Washington? It turned out to be sort of anti-Reagan day.

MR. SPEAKES: Not really. Our statement on it was one we issued Friday afternoon.

Okay.

END

10:22 a.m. PDT

1:22 p.m. EDT

8-28/4814

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
Santa Barbara, California

For Immediate Release

August 27, 1983

RADIO ADDRESS
OF THE
PRESIDENT
TO THE NATION

Santa Barbara Sheraton
Santa Barbara, California

9:0 A.M. PDT

12:0 noon EDT

THE PRESIDENT: My fellow Americans, the 19th of June, to be exact, a well known TV network producer was the commencement speaker at the high school where he had graduated on that same day, June 19th, 43 years ago. In speaking to this year's graduates, he pointed out some things that should be of concern to them regarding the state of the world. They were items taken from the front page of a June 19th issue of the New York Times their graduation day.

He said, "In Washington, the Administration is asking for more money. not to fight cancer or educate young people, but more money to build some of the most destructive weapons the world has ever seen," not very reassuring for a high school graduate hoping to live to an old age, and not very reassuring, either, to have a President who is called a warmonger. He went on to say, "In Latin America, the Times tells us, the United States is prepared to go to war to keep unfriendly powers out of this hemisphere. If push comes to shove, a young high school graduate could end up fighting there."

"In Europe," he told them, "a people not much different from you is being crushed in what the Times reports is being called an uncompromising and unrelenting fashion, and in Detroit, the Japanese threat, among other things, is forcing the Ford Motor Company out of the car business."

He pointed out that it didn't seem like much of a world to look forward to, but there it was on page 1, Graduation day, June 19th. Yes, his Graduation Day, June 19th, 1940. And as he went on to say, "We're all still here," although he wouldn't have bet on it back in 1940. The President being called a warmonger was Franklin Delano Roosevelt who kept increasing the defense budget. The Japanese threat was military, not economic, and Ford was going into the fighter plane business. And oh, yes, the European country that was being crushed was France, not Poland. Well, here it is 43 years later, and as he told that class of '83, "A good case can be made that the world is better, not worse." And the class of 1940 had something to do with that, just as the class of '83 can have a hand in making things better for graduating classes yet to be, even a class 43 years from now.

Young Americans are already doing their share to build a better world. Today our service men are participating in multi-national peacekeeping forces in Lebanon and the Sinai Peninsula.

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In the agreement between Lebanon and Israel, Israel agreed to withdraw its military forces totally. The responsibility now rests on others to negotiate in good faith on their own arrangements for withdrawal. Until this happens, Lebanon will remain a potential trouble spot.

But our current efforts in Lebanon are only a small part of our search for peace in the Middle East, including a compassionate, fair and practical resolution to the Palestinian problem.

The Middle East Peace Initiative which we announced almost a year ago is definitely alive and available to those parties willing to sit down together and talk peace. We remain committed to the positions we set forth, and we stand ready to pursue them in the context of the Camp David Accords.

Those positions are in the best long-term interests of all parties. Most importantly, they're the only realistic basis for a solution that has thus far been presented.

The United States continues to support UN Security Council Resolutions 338 and 242.

The establishment of new Israeli settlements in the occupied territories is an obstacle to peace and we're concerned over the negative effect this activity has on Arab confidence in Israel's willingness to return territory in exchange for security and a freely- and fairly-negotiated peace treaty.

The future of these settlements can only be dealt with through direct negotiations between the parties to the conflict. The sooner these negotiations begin, the greater the chance for a solution.

This Administration, like those before it, is firmly committed to the security of the State of Israel. We will help Israel defend itself against external aggression. At the same time, the United States believes, as it has always believed, that permanent security for the people of Israel and all the peoples of the region can only come with the achievement of a just and lasting peace, not by sole reliance on increasingly expensive military forces.

Unfortunately, the opportunities afforded by our initiative have yet to be grasped by the parties involved. We know the issues are complex, the risks for all concerned high, and much courageous statesman -- statesmanship, excuse me, will be required. Nevertheless, those complex issues can be resolved by creative and persistent diplomacy. Those risks can be overcome by people who want to end this bitter and tragic conflict. And in the process, the United States will be a full partner, doing everything we can to help create a just and lasting peace.

Until next week, thanks for listening, and God bless you.

END

9:11 a.m. PDT
12:11 p.m. EDT